

POULTRY

MRS. JONES' TURKEY TALK.

Mrs. Chas. Jones.

In a recent number of the Breeders' Gazette I find an article on "Blackhead," by Miller Purvis. I have spent a number of years raising turkeys and studying their diseases. I make a postmortem examination of nearly every turkey that dies on our farm, and find that nearly all of them die of the same trouble, which is a diseased liver. The liver is covered with white ulcers or greenish spots and is very much enlarged, as is also the gizzard, while the heart is much smaller than normal. I have found that at just the age Mr. Purvis men-

tions the black-head attacks them, when they are fully feathered. They become sluggish and slow in their movements and droop around and die. Now, instead of black-head being a specific disease, I think the condition of their heads is an indication of a diseased liver, brought on by over-feeding. The smallness of the heart of an affected bird indicates lack of vitality, and this is also caused by over-feeding.

Now, as far back as the memory of man reaches, turkeys lived on grasshoppers and insects, with what little grain and seeds that could be picked up in the field. We believe grasshoppers were created as an especial food for turkeys, as they seem to be so

nicely adapted to their digestive organs, and they can crowd their crop with them almost to the bursting point without injury—except to the grasshoppers. If you will examine a turkey with a crop filled full of grasshoppers, you will find that it is not packed like it would be with solid food. The grasshoppers form a helter-skelter sort of mass, and even after they reach the digestive organs they are not a solid mass, but at the same time possess the highest nutritive value. The solid food we feed swells after reaching the digestive organs, and these organs must enlarge and expand in order to take care of it.

Last year it was wet and cold and there were scarcely any grasshoppers, and again this year the grasshopper crop is very light. This condition, together with the torrid heat, has made

these two years exceptionally unfavorable for turkey raisers.

Mr. Purvis claims that hen-raised turkeys are more liable to have black-head than those raised by turkey mothers, the reason being that the poults do not get the exercise following chicken hens that they do following turkey hens, and consequently the disease is more liable to develop at a certain stage, as the digestive organs will stand the stuffing process until they are enlarged just so much, and then comes the collapse. For this reason I have fed and have advocated feeding dandelion leaves and onions, chopped fine, as they are a liver tonic and help to keep the liver and gizzard from enlarging. If I think a turkey is liable to this disease I make the feed more than half dandelion leaves and onions, and they should be fed sparingly, even with this green food mixture.

I am convinced that so-called black-head is only an indication of diseased digestive organs. Only a certain amount of food is required to sustain life, and when more than the required amount is taken the laws of nature are transgressed and there is a penalty that must be paid. I think it a misnomer to call this disease black-head, when it is only an indication of the collapse of over-worked digestive organs. Turkeys have a ferocious appetite and will bolt their food if they get a chance, whereas nature intended they should catch it on the run, which prevents their over-eating, as they get exercise along with their food. If we are going to be successful in raising our turkeys we must go back to nature's ways.

If taken in time, before the liver and gizzard become enlarged, a course of calomel pills (one-tenth grain) has been known to control the liver trouble. Give a calomel pill for three nights in succession, and the fourth night give a tablespoonful of olive oil or linseed oil. A lady in Indiana recently inquired for a remedy for this trouble. We advised the above treatment and she lost only two after trying it. Hers were the White Hollands and they stayed around the dooryard with the chickens and ate everything she fed them.

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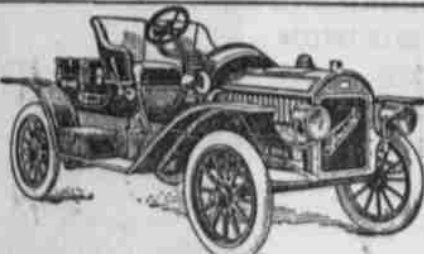
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